

Dare to Join

From the 8-10th February in Oradea, 25 Romanians from 16 Publishing Houses across Romania gathered for the 3rd Christian Publishers Conference called "Dare to Join". Even though we had reduced numbers, the key people were there. Yet again the cold winter weather struck, but the time was filled with some great fellowship and teaching, warming the hearts of all those that came.

The speakers represented three continents, each bringing their own personality and experience, which they passed on to both the people attending and to each other. They all said different things, yet God knit together all they said, one speaker often drawing on what another had said. John Van Diest from America told us 'the team of leaders were a big help to the Romanians in areas of information and motivation, and at the same time it gave me a burden for Eastern Europe, particularly for Romania'.

Dragomir Bojan, a Romanian Professor of Literature addressed the group on 'encouraging people to read'. It was such a privilege to have a gifted national address this subject when we live in a world of Media. Micula Ronela from CLC found Dragomir's seminar really interesting, and another participant felt that he was someone they would choose as a Coach or Mentor, when asked about this in Bob Clark's seminar.

Jan Bica from the Czech Republic shared his experience in Marketing and Distribution as a publisher from Eastern Europe. The Steering Committee asked if he would come, as they knew he had begun his publishing house in the spare room of his parent's home soon after the Eastern block opened up. 'Through Jan's session it confirmed that we are doing well in what we are doing. It is always great to see others that have started in a similar way and that they are doing so well today. They have struggled with the same things as we are and we can learn from each others mistakes.'

Bob Clark from the UK, European representative from CCMI, brought interactive teaching on being a Coach or Mentor, challenging people to not only find one for themselves, but to be one for others, helping and seeing the publishing ministry in Romania grow. 'Bob Clarke's session on Coaching or Mentoring was something that was useful not only for our publishing houses, but I see I can easily apply this to my private life, and so it was a double blessing'

People were pleased to hear from Manfred Dressel of Austria, who is a business consultant, as he worked with the group in making a business plan for their company. 'Manfred addressed some key issues, and helped many formulate a business plan, that had not previously been done,' said Bob Clark. We all enjoyed the notes of encouragement he pointed out from Noah's life. My personal favourites 'Stay fit. When you are 600 yrs old, someone might ask you to do something really big' and 'Plan ahead, it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark'. Kitty Bojan from Aqua Forte's first question was "Is he coming next year?" and when we looked at evaluation sheets where the seminars were rated 1-5, she had crossed this out and put 6, giving an above excellent score!

John Van Diest from America, who is the associate publisher for Tyndale, blessed the people with his wealth of experience in publishing along with his heart for the Lord. 'How to stay Focused' and '10 things I wished I knew before starting my first publishing house' were ideal topics for the Romanians and they gleaned so much. 'I enjoyed John's seminars because it was nice to see we are a small part of God's big mission'. Remus shared 'I discovered in him an assurance which I needed to be reminded of - that publishing is a very specific calling, I received a lot of answers to questions I have.'

Rick Iles from New Zealand, European director of 'LINKS', in partnership with Doug Ross from Global Literature Connections in the USA, sponsored this conference. Rick, who organised and ran the conference, was thrilled to see the way people continued to build on relationships, gleaned from one another, sharing experiences and building more of a family atmosphere within the group. It was great to see people in the Christian publishing world come together across lands and continents, to build each other up and learn from each other, which is one of the goals of LINKS. I asked John Van Diest what he had learnt from his time in Romania; 'The Romanians have come a long way from the days when they were under persecution till now, and at the present rate of increase they should be a major force in the publication of Christian Literature in Eastern Europe and perhaps in the surrounding countries.' Jan Bica shared; 'I really was glad to see how God is challenging Romanians to join together. I can see how hard it is for them and I can relate to it. I know it is something that God is challenging us with in the Czech Republic and it has given me something to think about.'

'I am very glad to be with my companions in publishing, as we do not have another opportunity to meet together as Romanians so this one is very important' said Oli. 'Of course the teaching was also very motivating for us and of a high standard, which we are grateful for,' said another participant.

We were able to move forward as a group in establishing a Romanian Association. Jeni Rosian had worked hard on the 'Statutes of the Association', giving the publishers a glimpse of what it would look like and what it means. We are now able to refine this to bring about the Association. There is still a little way to go on this, but it looks like it will be completed by

June 2006. Daniel Chis shared; 'I felt that we really needed someone from outside Romania to help set the deadlines and some direction for beginning the Association. Rick has helped us in this.'

It was a time of learning, laughing, practicing and we hope to reap the benefits in the coming year as we all try to put into practice what we have learnt.